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Sharing the Work: An Analysis of the Issues in Worksharing and Jobsharing, by Noah Meltz, Frank Reid and Gerald S. Swatz, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1981, 90 pp.

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produce positive results. The existence of contingencies, those factors upon which positive outcomes are dependent, appears to be pervasive. The method of implementing the change strategy is critical if the action levers are to be changed as intended (p. 278).

It is almost impossible to foresee all possible factors that may affect the change program. The basic question is how to make general prescriptions for work-improvement responsive to specific situations. "Lack of complete knowledge about contingencies and change processes makes it difficult to specify precisely under what conditions a particular strategy is likely to be successful or to know how to carry out a change program effectively. Without such understanding, it is difficult to devise a work-improvement program assured of success in a particular context" (p. 279).

This reasoning based on an in-depth analysis of many work-improvement experiments shows the limited application of general schemes when applied across the organizational and national boundaries. In the field of organizational theory there is still not enough recognition how careful we should be when trying to understand the organizational phenomena taken from the whole variety of circumstances. Even more restraint is badly needed in the formulation of organizational policies on the basis of foreign experience. The book here under review is particularly useful in this respect.

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Sharing the Work: An Analysis of the Issues in Worksharing and Jobsharing, by Noah Meltz, Frank Reid and Gerald S. Swatz, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1981, 90 pp.

The continuing problem of high unemployment throughout most of the Western industrialized world has led to an increasingly vigorous search for solutions outside the tra-

ditional realm of government macroeconomic policy. Changing the pattern of working time in order to increase the total number of employment opportunities, is one strategy which is receiving growing amounts of attention on both sides of the Atlantic. This book contributes some worthwhile points to a debate which has so far generated more heat than light.

Sharing the Work considers the merits of two modifications to working time practice: the introduction of temporary short-time working as an alternative to layoffs, and the development of jobsharing opportunities. The authors' aim in writing the book was 'to create a theoretical model that could be used to assess the feasibility of worksharing and jobsharing in the Canadian labour market, and to outline possible changes in government policy to facilitate such practices' (p. vii).

This objective sets the plan of the book. The early chapters are devoted to developing simple models which seek to determine the effects of these changes to working time, on the costs and supply of labour. Whilst costs are seen to rise in the short term as a result of worksharing (due to employers' increased contributions to unemployment insurance, pension schemes, etc.) the authors argue that this will be offset by lower costs of re-hire and training (in the case of temporary short-time working) and by gains in productivity and manpower flexibility (in the case of jobsharing). On the question of labour supply, the authors use indifference curves to show people's potential willingness (particularly females, and younger and older workers) to forego additional income in order to enjoy greater leisure time. Following this, a series of collective agreements are examined in order to identify the type of industry most likely to include a worksharing provision in their agreement; those industries employing a large proportion of full-time female workers are identified as ones particularly likely to include a short-time working provision within their agreements.

The penultimate chapter then considers the implications of the foregoing analysis for government policies; among other factors, the importance of amending Unemployment Insurance legislation, to allow employees who are working short time to draw UI benefits, is identified as crucial to the development of this practice in preference to layoffs.

Overall, the treatment of temporary short-time working is much more satisfactory in this book than the discussion of job-sharing. Indeed, that two very different proposals for amending working time should be considered suitable for a joint analysis, is rather puzzling. Also, like a number of other writings in recent years, this present argument suffers not only from a lack of empirical findings on how jobsharing works in practice (admittedly difficult given its very limited development), but also from a failure to adequately consider the institutional rigidities which, together with the question of short-term costs, have so far frustrated any major initiatives in the area of jobsharing.

In a number of other aspects too — such as the discussion of the economic model of labour costs, and the negative attitudes of the Canadian unions towards worksharing (attitudes which are markedly different to those held by many unions in Europe) — the argument suffered from too great a brevity, which in places resulted in considerable oversimplification of the issues. This book also underlines the point that greater attention must be paid to a conceptual clarification of 'work-sharing' — a term which in Europe is used to cover a much wider range of proposals (including a permanent reduction in the working week, reduced overtime, and even early retirement schemes) than simply the introduction of temporary short-time working practices.

Nevertheless, particularly for its discussion of short-time working, this book is useful. As the authors comment, the use of layoffs is both 'inequitable and inefficient' (p. 72). The development of temporary short-time working practices and more generally, the feasibility of reorganizing working time

as part of a broader strategy to reduce unemployment, certainly deserves further close attention.

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La durée du travail dans les pays en voie de développement, par D. Maric, Genève, Bureau International du Travail, 1981, 138 pp., ISBN 92-2-202732-9.

A Shorter Workweek in the 1980's, by William McGaughey, Jr., Theetsterose Publications, White Bear Lake, Minnesota, 1981, 308 pp., ISBN 0-9605630-0-8.

Le thème de la durée du travail a fait l'objet en 1981 de deux publications, l'une à caractère très descriptif et l'autre à caractère plus critique. Ce sont deux ouvrages complémentaires qui, sous des aspects différents, méritent assurément d'être analysés attentivement et qui, avec les Actes du XXXVI^e Congrès des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval sur la Réduction de la durée du travail, forment une trilogie fort instructive à la compréhension du phénomène socio-économique de la durée du temps passé au travail.

L'étude de Maric, comme il le précise dans son avant-propos, fait pendant à l'étude sur la durée du travail dans les pays industrialisés publiée en 1975 et s'inscrit dans le cadre du Programme international de l'OIT pour l'amélioration des conditions et du milieu de travail. L'étude de Maric porte sur les pays indépendants en voie de développement selon la définition des Nations Unies.

Après avoir brièvement situé le contexte économique et social des pays en voie de développement, en guise d'introduction, l'auteur présente une analyse comparative de la réglementation relative à la durée du travail dans les divers pays en voie de développement d'Afrique, d'Asie, d'Amérique latine et des Caraïbes qui font l'objet de son analyse. Cette analyse de la réglementation présente un